



AUGUST WESLAKER AND HIS FAMILY OF PITTSBURGH, PENNA.

by
C. A. Weslager

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This account is dedicated to
the loving memory of my father

Fred H. Weslager

Born February 18, 1884, died May 21, 1958

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have been working on this account off and on for many years, although its relatively few pages might suggest that it should have been written in much shorter time. When I began, there was no documented information about August Weslager's birthplace, the names of his parents and grandparents, nor the circumstances that preceded his coming to America. In fact, although it was vaguely known that a son born to him and Catharina had died in Germany, none of the members of the immediate family knew the name of the child, nor were they aware, as I later learned, that a daughter also died in infancy. Nor did any of the family know where August lived in Germany before coming to America. All of this information, and much more, might have been obtained during August's lifetime, but no one then apparently felt any urgency to compile such data, unaware that future generations of Weslagers might be curious about their ancestry.

My problem, therefore, was to develop basic information long after the principals had died without leaving any records relative to their backgrounds. My late father, Fred H. Weslager, who had an excellent memory combined with a questioning mind, had once corresponded with an aunt in Duisburg, and although she died many years ago, it gave me a lead to pursue through the Lutheran church there. My father had also questioned his father from time to time, obtaining miscellaneous information, which he passed along to me during my boyhood.

At one time or another I talked to and obtained information from all my Weslager aunts and uncles although it was admittedly incomplete. The two still living, Aunt Clara (Mrs. Roy F. Barclay) and Uncle Al (Albert J. Wollschlaeger) were extremely kind, and deserve special mention. I also want to acknowledge the assistance of my mother (Mrs. Alice Lowe Weslager) and my Aunt Mamie (Mrs. Albert J. Wollschlaeger). Aunt Mamie made available to me information about my grandparents, as well as data about their church affiliations which I could not have obtained elsewhere.

I hope there are no errors of fact in this account, since I have done my utmost to make it correct in every detail. However, if any inaccuracies should be found, the responsibility rests with me, not with those who gave me assistance.

C.A.W.

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1.

August Weslager was a plain, simple man.¹ He lived and died known only to his family and a small circle of friends and neighbors. He made no contributions to the arts and sciences. One might even question taking the time and effort to write about him. Although it is true that he and many others like him were individually unimportant, taken together they played a part in America's industrial growth. There is also a sentimental reason for telling his story. He was my grandfather, and I owe my American birthright to him, as do all others named Weslager.

August Weslager was one of thousands of German immigrants who settled in that section of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, first called Birmingham, later known as the South Side. In due course, he moved to Allentown Borough, and still later, to Beltzhoover Borough, where he became a home owner.

Into Pittsburgh during the middle and late part of the 19th century a stream of immigrants poured from Europe. Pittsburgh needed these workmen to build its streets and buildings, and to labor in its iron, steel and glass factories. As time went on, the newcomers brought up their families as members of a new American society.

William Penn first gave haven in Pennsylvania to the downtrodden Protestant sectarians from Germany. Religious persecution, crop failures, poverty, and famine all influenced German families to come to America. In 1683, Francis Daniel Pastorius brought the first contingent from the Rhine, and settled them in part of Philadelphia known as Germantown. In subsequent years, in a series of migratory waves, hundreds of thousands of others followed the first band across the Atlantic.

A very late wave between 1860 and 1890 swept August Weslager from Germany with other farmers, farm laborers, and mill workers to join their countrymen in the new land. Hamburg and Bremen were the ports through which these Germans left their homeland. It is likely that August departed from Bremen. I attempted to find documentation about his departure but was advised by the Bremen *Staatsarchiv* that an air raid on December 20, 1943, destroyed all the passenger lists that were kept on file since 1832.

¹ I have used the Americanized form of the family name throughout the text. The original German name, with its variants, will later be discussed in detail.

On the days preceding the regular sailings, Bremen's streets and the banks of the river Weser bustled in the confusion of noisy families preparing to leave. With their belongings tied in bundles, crammed in boxes and battered trunks, or wrapped in blankets and tablecloths, these emigrating families were in search of new opportunities. America offered them freedom of speech and worship — the right to own property — the privilege of a fair and reasonable wage — escape from compulsory military service — adequate food and shelter for their families — equal rights to live.

Like the others, August Weslager came to America in search of a better life. He broke the ties and traditions holding him to the fatherland. He started a new life in a new land, spending the remainder of his years toiling in the iron and steel industries in the Monongahela Valley. He never returned to Germany — he didn't want to go back, not even for a visit. America was good to him and his family, returning as much as he gave. He was happy to be accepted in his new home and to raise a new generation as Americans.

2.

The German government is very thorough in maintaining and preserving documentary records, and in the archives at Berlin there may still be found old church records from West Prussia where August Weslager was born. I engaged Dr. Herbert Spruth, a German genealogist, to search these records for data relative to August and his family. He combed old church books, some damaged by water, others eaten by worms and rodents, in which Lutheran ministers, Catholic priests, and other church scribes entered birth, baptismal, wedding and death records dating from the early 18th century. Dr. Spruth submitted to me, at intervals, reports on his findings with all the sources, and I have condensed these data in the following discussion.

August Weslager was born August 15, 1852 in a farm village then called Gross Komorsk (sometimes spelled Kommorsk), also known as Kommern. This village lay in the lowlands on the west side of the river Weichsel (later called the Vistula) in the *kreis* or "district" of Schwetz in the province of West Prussia.

August's baptismal certificate states that on August 22, 1852 he was baptized *August Wollschlaeger*, and his surname was recorded exactly as I have spelled it.² His father's name was given as *Heinrich Wollschlaeger* and his occupation as *Eigenkätner*, which means he owned his own dwelling and a plot of land adjacent to it. Later, according to information passed down in the family, but not documented, August's father became a forester in government employ.

² A copy of the baptismal certificate was supplied me by Herrn Kutzsch of the Protestant Church of the Union in Berlin, with a letter dated November 8, 1962. Herr Kutzsch stated that the church records of Neuenburg were all transferred to Berlin for safe keeping.

August's mother's name in the baptismal certificate is given as Maria Manikowska. Many German-speaking people in this area of West Prussia had Slavish names because of the political changes that had taken place. August's godparents were named as Johann Strelan, another *Eigenkätner*, and Fräulein Anna Manikowska his mother's unmarried sister.

August was baptized in the town of Neuenburg, also in the district Schwetz, not far distant from Gross Komorsk. See map, *Figure 1*. The Lutheran church serving the area was located in Neuenburg.

The record of the marriage of August's father was also found in the church records (*Record 3676 p. 30, No. 72*) and may be translated as follows:

"The bachelor and future property owner Heinrich Wollschläger of Gr. Kommorsk, second son of property owner Peter Wollschläger of Gr. Kommorsk, with the spinster Marie Menkowski, oldest daughter of property owner Thomas Menkowski at Gr. Kommorsk, applied for a marriage license XXI, XXVI, 1st Advent, married December 4, 1842. Age of bridegroom—23, of bride—21 years."

The word translated above as "property owner" is rendered in the German text as *Eigentümer* and the meaning is different from *Eigenkätner* previously cited. An *Eigentümer* was a member of the West Prussian land-owning class, distinct from the peasant farmer who worked for the larger *Eigentümer* or *Rittergütsbesitzer*, the class corresponding to landed gentry. August's grandfather, Peter Wollschläger, was not a farm worker, but owned his own property which encompassed a large farm at Gross Kommorsk. Property in Germany descended to the first son, and since Heinrich was the second son he did not inherit his father's lands, but after his marriage had to content himself with a smaller piece of property.

The church records also disclose that August's mother, Maria Menkowska (also spelled Menkowski, Manikowski, etc.), was born August 30, 1822, and baptized on September 1, 1822. Her father, Thomas Menkowska, an *Eigentümer*, had been baptized a Catholic. Maria's mother, however, was a Lutheran, and her name was Anna Puwal, which the scribes changed in the church records to read Puwald, Pawalowska, Puwalowna, Puwatowna, etc. Maria's younger sister, Anna Menkowska (August's godmother) was born in 1824, and the two sisters had a brother named Augustin. The Menkowska family, like the Wollschlaegers, was an old one in West Prussia and there were earlier marriages between the families.

August was the youngest child of Heinrich and Maria, and the church records list the births of five others: Friedrich Wilhelm, Johann, August Heinrich, Helene Amalie, and Eduard.

There were many other Wollschlaegers living in West Prussia, and such variants of the family name as Wolschläger, Wollenschläger, and Wohlschläger appear in the Neuenburg Church records and elsewhere.

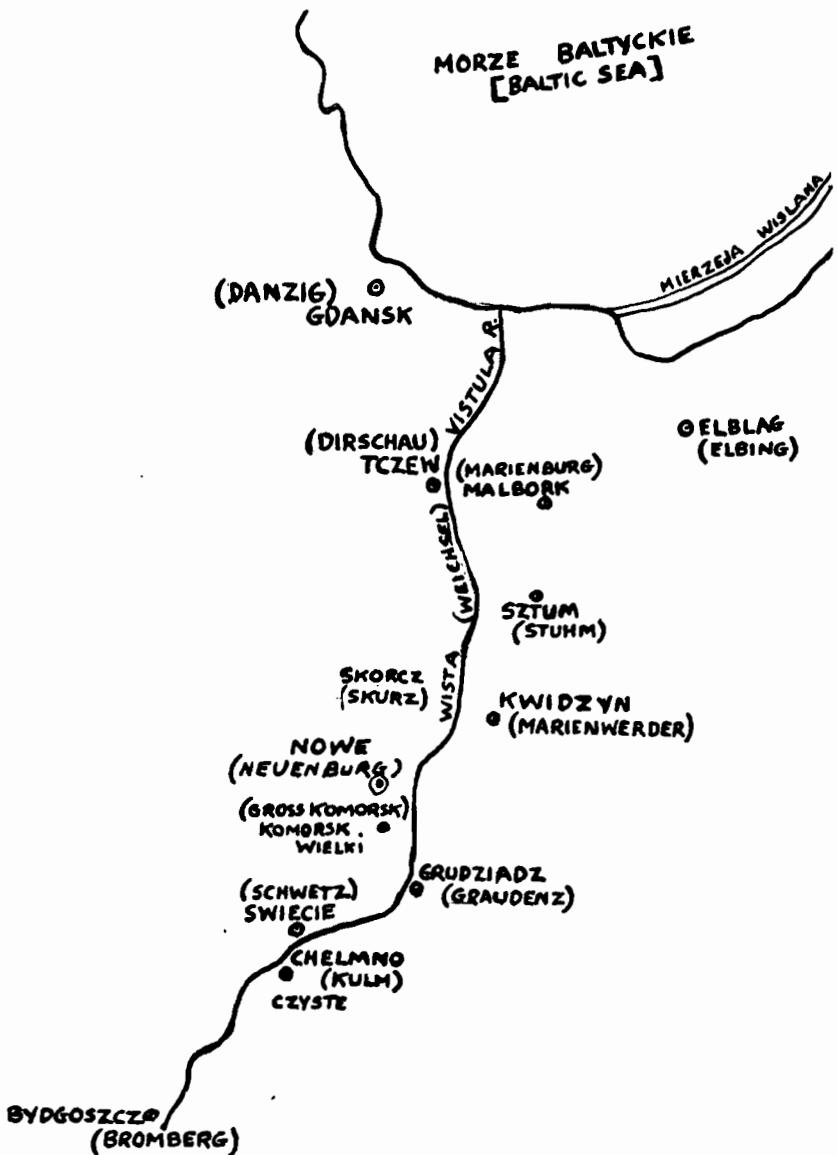


FIGURE 1

The area of West Prussia where August Wesselager spent his boyhood, showing his birthplace, Gross Komorsk (now Komorsk Wielki); the town where he was baptized in the Lutheran church, Neuenburg (now Nowe); and Czyste, where he met and married Catharina Walter, and where he worked on a farm before going to Duisburg. Original German names given in parentheses.

In 1788, there was a Martin Wolschläger, a musketeer in the regiment Kochebar, and in 1816 a Peter Wolschläger was a miller at Wiede near Treul. The names of Joachim Wohlschläger, Petrus Wollschläger, Michael Wollschläger, Johann Wollschläger, Franz Wollschläger, Peter Paul Wollenschläger, Ludwig Wollenschläger, Herman Wollenschläger, Ernst Friedrich Wollschläger, and many others — all no doubt related — appear in the West Prussia church records.

The earliest entry of the name found to date (a translation of a Latin text) appears in the Gross Komorsk records of 1730 when Michael Wolszleger and his wife Agneta gave birth to a child Jakob. On October 10, 1771, the Gross Komorsk records list the baptism of Elisabeth, daughter of Petrus and Marianna Wolsleier, and in 1797 the name of Peter Wolsleier appears, probably the same individual.

Dr. Spruth advised me that the family name Wollschläger may also be found in Deutsch-Bork (Neumark, Province Brandenburg, Kreis Zauch-Belzig) as a farming family around 1680. He offered the opinion that there may have been a movement of the family to West Prussia during the colonization period under Frederick the Great, although this has not been documented to the best of my knowledge.

The appearance of the family name (which became Weslager in America) in so many different renditions suggests that there has been confusion over the spelling for 300 years, and it is next to impossible to single out any of the versions as the original one. As I will point out later, August Weslager himself used various spellings of his surname.

August's mother died of consumption on June 20, 1857 at the age of 34, and was buried at Gross Komorsk. She left four children: Friedrich aged 14, Johanne aged 12, Helene Amalie aged 8, and August, then only four. At the time of her death the family lived in Warlubien a small village near Gross Komorsk. This information was also recorded in the church books.

3.

At the time of August's birth, Gross Komorsk was a hamlet of several hundred families; in 1905, there were 2340 occupants of which 1497 were inhabitants of the *kätnerdorf*, or farm-laborer section of the village, and 843 lived in the *bauerndorf*, the section occupied by land-owning farmers. The area produced rye, potatoes, oats, wheat, barley, and flax.

Gross Komorsk was about 65 miles south of the city of Danzig situated at the delta and mouth of the Weichsel on the Baltic Sea. From the Baltic southward the Weichsel flowed through farmland and dairyland dotted with villages and hamlets separated by pastures and cultivated fields. Within the area were a number of large baronies, or farm estates, as well as many small farms.

This area of West Prussia had been part of Germany for about 80 years at the time of August's birth. Originally it was occupied by

Slavic tribes, but in the 14th century the country was invaded by the Teutonic Knights, a German military order formed for service in the Crusades. Instead of seeking infidels in the Holy Land, the knights found pagan Slavs on the shores of the Baltic and either slaughtered or reduced them to serfs. The Teutonic Knights defeated the heathen Bororussians, seizing their land and calling it Prussia. The knights built many castles and fortified towns, and their principal stronghold was Marienburg. An ancient castle stood there during August's boyhood which he had seen when he visited Danzig.

In 1772, Russia, Austria, and Prussia each seized a part of the land formerly occupied by Slav tribes that had become known as Poland. Following this, German families were settled along the Weichsel and intense efforts made to Germanize the Poles. Perhaps, as Dr. Spruth suggested, it was during this period that August's ancestors came from West Germany to settle at Gross Komorsk.

After the first World War the section of West Prussia where Gross Komorsk was situated was returned to Poland under the Treaty of Versailles. It gave Poland access to the Baltic and became known as the "Polish Corridor." When Hitler attacked Poland in 1939, the "Polish Corridor" was temporarily returned to Germany. At the end of the second World War it was again taken away from Poland and returned to Germany. In the years that have elapsed since the close of the war, the area has become part of Poland and the German language is no longer spoken. All of the former German place-names have been given Polish names. A map of modern Poland shows none of the names, such as Gross Komorsk, Schwetz, Weichsel, etc., which are found on earlier German maps. Schwetz is now known as *Swiecie*, and August's birthplace is called *Komorsk Wielki*. The town where he was baptized, Neuenburg, is now called *Nowe*. Danzig has been changed to *Gdansk*, and Marienburg is called *Malbork*. If August Weslager was living today and visited the place of his birth he would find himself in a strange country where his native tongue is no longer spoken and all the German place-names of his youth have been completely erased from the map!

* * * *

After August's mother's death, when he was a child of four, his father remarried, and according to information handed down in the family, August's stepmother was not very kind to him. At an early age, according to custom, August was apprenticed and sent to live with a cobbler. The cobbler and blacksmith were the two essential occupations in each farm community, and the cobbler was not only a repairman, but he designed and made boots and shoes. The apprentice was supposed to live as a member of his employer's family, and schooling was to be provided. The cobbler's wife, so the story goes, as told me by my father, decided she could use August to better advantage on household chores than sending him to school. When he started for school she would give him a note — and a package for the schoolmaster. The note, which August could not read, asked the schoolmaster to excuse him from class, and the package contained a

bribe in the form of fresh eggs or butter. August did not then understand why the schoolmaster patted his head and dismissed him. He told my father many years later that he blamed his lack of a formal education on the wife of his boyhood employer. I do not vouch for this story — I merely record it as it was told me. However, my father, as a young man, worked in a Pittsburgh mill with his father, and August told him many stories about his boyhood as they ate their lunches together and traveled back and forth to the mill. Incidentally, when raising his family in America, August found a practical use for his knowledge of leather working and shoe repairing.

In West Prussia young men were taken from the farms to serve in the army for certain periods of the year, and released at designated times to work on the farms. August told my father that he was taken into the army and assigned to a cavalry unit that had won its laurels in the Franco-Prussian War. To many Prussian youths this assignment to a branch of the service having heroic traditions might have been a source of pride. August, on the contrary, had no desire to be a soldier and he resented the restrictions of military life. Nevertheless, he served his period of compulsory military training and was discharged. He carried with him throughout his lifetime a distaste for Prussian military disciplines.

4.

Now we come to additional documented records found in Germany which also provide interesting and authentic information about August and his immediate family. One of these records, dated September 20, 1875, occurs in the archives of Duisburg, an industrial city on the Rhine.

The register of new arrivals to Duisburg that year lists the day laborer *August Wollenschläger*, a different spelling from the one shown on his baptismal certificate. Accompanying him were his wife, Catharina Walter, aged 19, their infant son Heinrich, born August 5, 1875 (named after August's father), and his wife's mother, a widow named Catharina Walter, aged 44. The register gives her maiden name as Ulner, although Ulmer is probably meant. All newcomers to German cities were required to register before taking up residence and young men had to furnish papers to prove they had fulfilled their military obligations.

This record also confirms information previously cited relative to the date and place of August's birth found in the church books.³

³ Information obtained in a letter dated June 22, 1962 from Herrn Schaffner, *Stadtarchivaroberinspektor*, *Archiv der Stadt Duisburg*, based on the register of new arrivals at Duisburg, 1872-76, City Archives 80/89 No. 336. I have a photostatic copy of this entry in my possession. I would at this time like to acknowledge the assistance of Mrs. Waltraut Oswald who translated my letters into the German language and also translated replies for me. I have retained this voluminous correspondence relating to the family which is available to anyone interested in the sources.

It further identifies August, his wife, and his mother-in-law as Lutherans. It adds the additional information that the little family had come to Duisburg from the town of Klein-Czyste where Catharina was born 19 years before.

Klein-Czyste was a West Prussian farm hamlet on the eastern side of the Weichsel. Gross Komorsk was about 35 miles distant on the opposite side of the river. Klein-Czyste was in the *Kreis* called Kulm, part of the *Regierungsbezirk* (administrative district) of Marienwerder. It appears that August must have left his birthplace following his release from the army to seek work on a farm at Klein-Czyste where he met Catharina. As the youngest son of a second son of land-owning Peter Wollschläger he did not inherit any of his grandfather's property which meant that he was reduced to the class of a farm laborer. He must have decided to try to improve his position by moving to Klein-Czyste.

In 1905, Klein-Czyste had only 152 inhabitants, and it was probably smaller when August settled there. The city of Marienwerder (political center of the district where both Klein-Czyste and Gross Komorsk were situated) was the "capital" city of West Prussia, located on the Liebe River, a tributary to the Weichsel. When August and Catharina lived and farmed in Klein-Czyste, the population of Marienwerder was less than 14,000. The names of these places have also been changed in recent years by the Polish government. Today, Marienwerder is called *Kwidzyn* and Kulm is known as *Chelmno*.

Following their marriage, August and Catharina lived in Klein-Czyste where Catharina's parents (Carl and Catharina Walter) owned and operated a farm. Catharina, born June 5, 1856, had attended school and received a good education for her time. Life on a farm in West Prussia had taught her many things, which she was able to put to good use in later years when she was raising her own family in America; how to plant, care for cows and chickens, make cheese and butter, sew, and knit, and other useful chores.

Catharina had two brothers, Carl Walter (his name in all German sources is given as Carl, but in America he was also known as Charles), and Johann Ulmer, a half-brother. Carl, the younger, was born April 21, 1860 in Klein-Czyste (April 19 is also given in one source), and Johann (John) Ulmer was born November 21, 1849 in the same hamlet. These two chaps became very fond of August, finding much to admire in their sturdy young countryman who had unusual physical stamina and whose tongue was glib with stories. August also grew deeply fond of Catharina's two brothers.

August shortly developed a dislike for farm life in Klein-Czyste, and in later years he told my father how unrewarding it was to be employed by a *gutsbesitzer*, or farm landlord. Farm laborers were paid only on the days they worked, and when the weather was unfavorable they were idle. If a laborer was lucky enough to obtain work as a sort of share-cropper, the problem of wresting a living from the

soil made the landlord richer while the tenant remained poor, unable fully to enjoy the fruits of his labor. A decision to leave the farm and find more remunerative work in an industrial plant was one of the reasons August left Klein-Czyste and moved to Duisburg in the fall of 1875.

From Klein-Czyste to Duisburg was a distance of more than 325 miles — a long, tiresome, and expensive trip. August was only 23 years of age and Catharina had just turned 19. It required the boldness of youth to pull up roots from the land of their birth to seek a new and different kind of life in a distant city where their clothes, manners, and dialect marked them as outlanders. See accompanying map, *Figure 2*, showing the distance from Klein-Czyste to Duisburg.

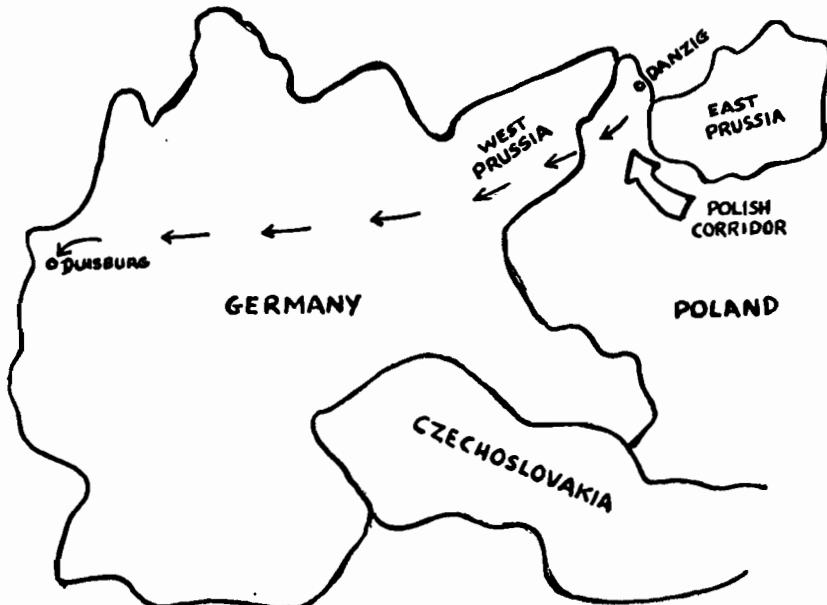


FIGURE 2

Arrow shows how August Weslager and his wife Catharina travelled from the land of their birth in West Prussia south of Danzig, to the industrial city of Duisburg on the Rhine from where they came to America. The area of Germany where they originally lived became the "Polish Corridor" at the end of the first World War, and after the second World War was taken from Germany and given to Poland.

From the viewpoint of settling in a city with industrial opportunities, Duisburg was the best choice August and Catharina could have made. Here the Ruhr intersects the Rhine, and the city then, as it is today, was the gateway to the Ruhr's industrial belt with its factories and rich mineral deposits. Duisburg also had steel and chemical plants of its own, and together with the neighboring Ruhrtort, it had

become the greatest inland harbor of Europe for the export of coal, coke, and steel. (During the second World War, Duisburg was a prime military target, and the city was repeatedly subject to destructive bombings.)

There was another reason why August and Catharina went to Duisburg — some of Catharina's relatives were already living there. The previous year, one of her relatives, Friedrich Ulmer (born May 30, 1846 in Klein-Czyste), his wife, born Pauline Heine (also in Klein-Czyste), and their five-year old son, Johann, had settled in Duisburg.

Carl and Anna Schiel also lived in Duisburg. Catharina was related to Anna — they were probably sisters.

Furthermore, the Walter family was a prominent one in Duisburg, and Cathrina's father had relatives there.⁴

On September 29, 1875, Catharina's brother, Carl Walter, then only 16 years of age came from Klein-Czyste to settle in Duisburg. That was only nine days after August, Catharina, and Carl's mother had arrived. Carl went to live with them in a little home August had rented in Feldmark, an industrialized suburb where new plants were under construction.

Industrial development in Germany increased rapidly after 1871, and hundreds of workers were needed in the industrial cities, many recruited from farms in West Prussia. In Duisburg the newcomers were settled in primitive barracks and in plain houses hastily built. Feldmark — later to be known as Hochfeld — was originally the farmland of Duisburg, with woods stretching to the Rhine and the Dickelsbach Creek. Then the *Vulkan Hütte* with four furnaces began to operate to produce iron, and soon thereafter the *Niederrheinische Hütte* with 12 huge furnaces was in operation. By the time August arrived, Duisburg was Germany's leading industrial city.

On February 19, 1877, a second child was born to August and Catharina. The infant was christened Maria Wollschläger on February 25 (named after August's mother). In the christening record, August's name and occupation were thus recorded: August Wollschläger, *Tagelöhner* (day laborer), and his wife's maiden name was again given as Catharina Walter. His name had been shortened from the way it was spelled two years before and differed from the spelling on his baptismal certificate. Carl and Anna Schiel were named in the certificate as godparents of the infant Maria. August and Catharina's place of residence was given in the certificate as Feldmark.⁵

⁴ On March 22, 1962, Herr Zimmerman, *Kirchengemeinde-Oberinspektor, Gemeindeamt für die Evangelischen Gemeinden Duisburg, Duissern, etc.*, supplied me with a number of birth certificates between 1857 and 1865 listing members of the Walter family.

⁵ A copy of Maria's christening certificate is in my possession, supplied by Herr Zimmerman with his letter of March 22, *loc. cit.* I also have a transcript of the birth certificate of Wilhelm Wollschläger which is on file in Duisburg.

The Lutheran records at Duisburg indicate that a third child, Wilhelm Wollschläger was born to August and Catharina on June 9, 1880. At that time, August and Catharina were living at 59 Kultur Strasse having moved from Feldmark. The record of Wilhelm's birth gives August's occupation as *Fabrikarbeiter* (factory worker), leaving no doubt that he was then employed in one of the Duisburg mills. The son Wilhelm, later to be called William, was brought to America at the age of two and raised in Pittsburgh. He was the father of Edward and Walter Weslager, my first cousins, and was always known to me as Uncle Will. He was a man of few words and a dry wit. He was employed for many years as a molder in the Pittsburgh foundries, an occupation requiring a skillful hand to make sand imprints of wooden patterns into which molten iron was poured to form castings.

Uncle Will was an inveterate fisherman. As a boy, I accompanied him, along with my father (and one or both cousins) on camping and fishing trips to Slippery Rock Creek, Conoquenessing Creek, the Youghiogheny River, and on other waterways near Pittsburgh. This was before either family owned an automobile, and we sometimes traveled by train, or more often, by suburban cars, which moved at high speed on tracks laid across farm fields, beside scenic streams, and over high trestles to Charleroi, "little" Washington, Uniontown, and other points which then seemed a long distance from home. We frequently traveled before daybreak or at night, and after leaving the streetcar, we usually walked several miles in the dark, carrying lanterns, fishing poles, bait, and baskets of food. Uncle Will had the faculty of finding excellent fishing holes at some of the most inaccessible places in western Pennsylvania. My only regret is that he died long before I obtained from Germany the certificate of his birth, which I am sure he didn't know was in existence. Often on these trips Uncle Will and my father exchanged conversation in German, especially when they were speaking of something not intended for younger ears. Both had been raised bilingually and spoke German fluently as well as English.

At the time of Wilhelm Wollschläger's birth, Catharina's half-brother, John Ulmer, and his wife Emilie (she was born August 11, 1861 in Klein-Czyste) were living at 127 Wanheimer Strasse in Duisburg.⁶ This was a main thoroughfare running through the industrial section, and it crossed Kultur Strasse where August, Catharina, their children, and Carl Walter and Catharina's mother were then living.

In August of 1962, my sister Dolores and her husband, W. Edward Buente, of Tallmadge, Ohio were on a European trip and they visited Duisburg for the specific purpose of locating our grandparents' former residence at 59 Kultur Strasse. However, they found no older dwellings — only post-war factories and modern flats. On what had been 59 Kultur Strasse (and on either side) the old residences had been

⁶ Information obtained in a letter dated September 11, 1962 from Herrn Schaffner providing census data on file in the Duisburg City Archives.

destroyed by bombings, and a plant producing technical measuring devices had been built there at the close of World War II.

The census records of 1880 show Catharina and August residing at 31 Eichen Strasse, in another industrialized section of Duisburg. Carl Walter, who was still single, and his widowed mother, now had their dwelling at 33 Eichen Strasse next to August and Catharina's home. At this time, although Wilhelm is listed, the census records do not include the other two children, Heinrich and Maria. The two infants, it seems certain, died prior to 1881, and Catharina's mother also died shortly after, although the exact dates are not known.

In July of 1881, August and Catharina were living at 46 Eichen Strasse, and in 1882 Catharina (but not August) is named in the census record as a resident at 33 Eichen Strasse. The reason why she was living there, no doubt with her brother Carl, but not with August, will shortly be evident.

Times were not easy in Germany, and the country was suffering an industrial recession. Work in the Duisburg mills proved unsteady for August, John Ulmer, and Carl Walter who all worked together. The hours were long and the wages barely adequate. August did not find in Duisburg the opportunities he sought when he left Klein-Czyste. But in the mills he heard stories of far-off America and especially of the great industrial city of Pittsburgh. Many of those who had gone to America formerly lived along the Rhine, and some had re-visited Germany to tell of their prosperity. Others had written to German relatives boasting of the high wages paid workmen in Pittsburgh's mills and foundries, and of the fine living conditions in Pennsylvania.

A thought began to take root in August's mind. He had already cut the ties with the farmland of his birth in West Prussia — it would not be much different to break away from Germany completely. He felt certain there would be opportunities for Catharina and himself in America where they could escape hardship and insecurity. One day, John Ulmer, said to him:

"August, I've been thinking of something. You and I must no longer be *Dummköpfe*. Why should we stay in Germany to sweat and starve when across the ocean there is plenty? I've been thinking of pulling up stakes and going to *das Land der Unbegrenzten Möglichkeiten*. Why not come along?"

August pondered over John's suggestion for several days, and he became more and more convinced that it was the best thing to do. Finally, he talked it over with Catharina. She offered no objections even if she had secret fears about leaving Germany to go to a far distant land. German husbands made such decisions, and good Frauen supported what their husbands believed best. Perhaps she may have looked at little Wilhelm, now taking his first steps, or thought of the unborn child then moving within her, with the feelings of a mother who wanted only the best for her children.

After weeks of hard work and frugality, August saved enough money for a one-way passage to America for himself. His last chore in Germany, he later told my father, was to spade an acre of potatoes on a farm in Hochfeld, to add a few more coins to his savings. He did not have enough money to pay for Catharina's passage, but that would come as soon as he found work in Pittsburgh. Likewise, John Ulmer had saved only sufficient money to pay for his passage; his wife Emilie also remained behind in Germany until he could send money for her boat ticket. Neither John nor August considered the possibility of failure, nor what might happen to them if they were unable to find work.

Twenty-eight days elapsed from the time the two men left Germany until they landed in America. The voyage across the Atlantic was dangerous and exciting. Shortly before his death, Uncle John Ulmer, then an old man who outlived August and Catharina, recalled for me some of the details of the harrowing voyage. He said that a hurricane drove the vessel off course, flooding the quarters crowded with German immigrants. All of the men, passengers and crew alike, were ordered to man the pumps to keep the ship afloat. The ship's master drew a revolver and threatened one of the passengers who refused to follow his orders. John and August worked at the pumps, and also assisted in removing cabin doors, which were nailed and lashed together to make life rafts. Luckily, the battered ship managed to weather the storm, but Uncle John told me that he fell to his knees and prayed — and he said this was a luxury that he did not often indulge himself!

Our information is that John and August entered America through Castle Garden, then in the Battery at the lower end of Manhattan Island.⁷ Castle Garden had first been a fort, later an auditorium where such stars as Jenny Lind performed on her American debut. In 1896, it became the aquarium, which has since been removed. Between 1855 and 1890, the building was a reception center for immigrants. After being processed through the immigration lines at Castle Garden, August and John rode a day coach on the Pennsylvania R.R., arriving in Pittsburgh, so far as I am able to determine, in October of 1881.

The city of Pittsburgh had not yet felt the growing pains of the annexations of its surrounding boroughs — the city's population was then only 157,000. August and John shared the same room in a boarding house on 12th Street, in the heart of industrial Birmingham on the south side of the city. The section was reminiscent of Duisburg —

⁷ Sec. 4, *Act of Congress*, March 2, 1819, required that after Jan. 1, 1820, the master of arriving vessels must deliver to the collector of the port a list of passengers taken aboard at foreign ports, with their age, sex, occupation, and nationality. The collector was required to forward copies of these lists quarterly to the Secretary of State. I engaged a researcher to study the arrival lists, now on microfilm, at the National Archives from August 19, 1881 through November 21, 1881 (*Microfilm Rolls Nos. 441, 442, 443, 444*), but unfortunately he was unable to locate the entry of August's arrival which still remains to be found.

Carson Street, like Wanheimer Strasse, was the main thoroughfare, and the Monongahela resembled the Rhine. Workers were in demand, and despite their ignorance of the English language, both men quickly found employment. August's first job was as a laborer in the foundry of the American Bridge Company. As he learned to speak and understand the English language, his experience in the Rhineland mills served him in good stead, and he was employed as a millwright in the Schoenberger Foundries; later he worked in the Sligo Steel Mill.

August saved enough from his wages to pay partially for the passage of his wife and baby son. He augmented his savings by borrowing a small sum from the Reverend Brandt, pastor of the Lutheran Church on the South Side, a haven for German immigrants, popularly known as *Brandt's Kirche*. This kindly minister was August's first friend in America.

In March of 1882, so far as we are able to reconstruct the date, Catharina and two-year old Wilhelm joined August in Pittsburgh. Catharina, who was almost ready to deliver another child, sold their household goods before leaving Duisburg. She bade tearful farewell to Friedrich and Pauline Ulmer and to Carl and Anna Schiel — never to see them again. Can we not also see her visiting for the last time the graves of her two babies, Heinrich and Maria?

Catharina did not come to America alone. Accompanying her were Emilie (John Ulmer's wife), Catharina's brother, Carl Walter, and his fiancée, a German girl named Mary Karl. The news they had received from August and John was so encouraging they resolved to seek the prosperity that awaited in America. The money sent by John and August, probably through the Lutheran church authorities, paid for their passages. What a happy reunion when they all met in Pittsburgh, and what a load was lifted from August's heart to rejoin his wife and son.

In anticipation of Catharina's arrival, August tried to find rooms to rent on the South Side, but there were no suitable vacancies. By now, scores of German workers had moved their families to the hill top — Beltzhoover and Allentown had been incorporated as boroughs (Allentown in 1869 and Beltzhoover 1875), and the Knoxville Land Improvement Company was inducing potential homeowners to build in Knoxville, incorporated as a borough in 1877.

August rented a small house owned by Chris Michael in Allentown Borough, near the site of what was later the head of the Knoxville Incline. The crossroads here commanded the southern entrance to Pittsburgh, where the road from Brownsville intersected the pike from "little" Washington — presently Warrington Avenue. On this hill, overlooking a panoramic view of the city, the Weslagers made their first American home in a rented frame dwelling. Here Edward was born on April 18, 1882, and Fred, my father, on February 18, 1884.

To celebrate the birth of Edward, his first American-born son, August stopped at Weber's store on the South Side on his way home from the foundry to purchase a kitchen clock. This quaint timepiece, with

its carved wooden case, enamelled white face with Roman numerals, and brass pendulum, remained in August's possession until shortly before his death when he gave it to my father. It ticked merrily on our kitchen mantle during my boyhood, as it had in the Weslager's Beltzhoover home during my father's youth. Before his death, my father gave the clock to me. Its case is now coated with a patina from long exposure to kitchen fumes; the brass pendulum is tarnished; the white enamel on the face has flecked away. Yet, it keeps time accurately. Perhaps it is not too much to hope that this clock may continue to serve later generations of the family.

Outgrowing their first home, the Weslagers, about 1886, rented a larger house on Warrington Avenue, or Washington Avenue, as it was then called. Not long after, there was a recession in the steel industry. The glow faded from the sky over the Monongahela, and no smoke emptied from the stacks. This was before the days of unemployment compensation and relief checks. The wage-earner tightened his belt, cut his living expenses, and fed his family as best he could. August found temporary work on a farm in Castle Shannon; he also worked as a teamster for Fred Eibes, a local businessman; he was also temporarily employed by Thomas S. Maple, a building contractor. Equal to the lowliest job, he was able to keep bread on the table and a roof over the heads of the members of his growing family.

When the mills reopened, August returned to his former job. By now he had seen enough of America to convince him that a family needed the security of home ownership — the ambition of every German immigrant. The great dream of these Germans was to own land, the more land, the higher their status. Near the house August was renting, Benjamin McLain and Thomas S. Maple, his son-in-law, had begun to lay out a new plan of lots in Beltzhoover borough. Their contracting firm, McLain & Maple, was already building new houses which were being principally purchased by German workmen.

On July 7, 1887, in consideration of the modest sum of \$800, August and Catharina bought a small lot from Thomas S. Maple. The property was described as follows in the deed:

"All that certain piece of ground situated in the Borough of Beltzhoover, County and State aforesaid, being Lot No. Eight Hundred and twenty one (821) in McLain & Maple's First Plan of Beltzhoover of record in the Recorders Office of said County in Plan Book Vol. 5 pages 298 & 299, and bounded and described as follows, to wit: Beginning at a pin on the Eastern side of Florence Avenue [later called Delmont] at the corner of Lot No. 820, thence northwardly along Florence Avenue Twenty five feet to the corner of Lot. No. 822; thence eastwardly along the line of said Lot One Hundred feet to Oak Alley; thence southwardly along Oak Alley twenty five feet to Florence Avenue at the place of beginning."⁸

⁸ *Allegheny County Deed Book*, Vol. 586, p. 581.

After taking ownership of the new house, August, assisted by his sons, enlarged it. It was a humble dwelling according to modern standards – only five rooms, but it belonged to him. He had finally become an *Eigentümer* in America, and his home was far superior to the farm cottages in Gross Komorsk or Klein-Czyste.

The lot August purchased from Maple was on the old Beltzhoover farm. A portion of the farm, including August's lot, was purchased by McLain & Maple in 1875 from John and Harriet Murray. Harriet, one of Jacob Beltzhoover's daughters, inherited this land through her father's will, dated 1831.⁹ The farm had previously belonged to Melchor Beltzhoover, Jacob's father, who purchased 248½ acres in 1794 from John Ormsby, Sr. Ormsby had acquired the land in two tracts purchased from John Penn (William Penn's son) and John Penn, Jr., in 1791.¹⁰

August and his family never knew that their little home lot was part of historic property that can be traced directly back to William Penn's original land grant from Charles II.

During 1892, the year of the great Homestead strike, August was working in the Sligo Rolling Mill. About 1896, he was employed by the Fisher Foundry and Machine Company. About 1907, he found work with the American Foundry and Construction Company in Hazlewood. Despite his lack of formal schooling, his experience in the mills and foundries in Germany and America now qualified him for the position of foreman over a crew of millwrights.

5.

Sadness came to August on April 24, 1908 when Catharina died, at the age of 51, after a long, incurable illness. She had been a loyal and steadfast wife who made many sacrifices for her family. August bought a grave lot in the church cemetery on Brownsville Road in what was then Carrick Borough, owned by *Der Deutschen Vereinigten Evangelischen Gemeinde Von Birmingham S.S.* The original church, on Jane Street in the South Side, was known as the German United Evangelical Church, or more popularly as the "Rooster Church." The name was derived from a cock atop the weather vane on a tall spire. (The congregation in recent years has moved to a new sanctuary on Carrick Avenue now known as the Birmingham Congregational Church.)

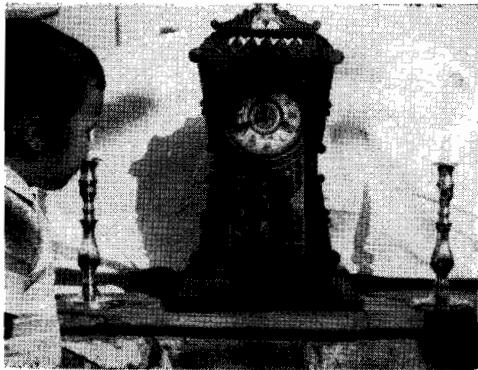
The cemetery owned by the church was known as Zimmerman's Cemetery, from the pastor, Philip Jacob Zimmerman, who served the church from 1852 to 1862. On occasion it was also called Lorch's Cemetery from another pastor, Gustave Lorch, minister from 1869 until his death in 1899. Although August was not a member of this church

⁹ *Allegheny County Will Book, Vol. 4, p. 242.*

¹⁰ *Allegheny County Deed Book, Vol. 3, p. 308.*

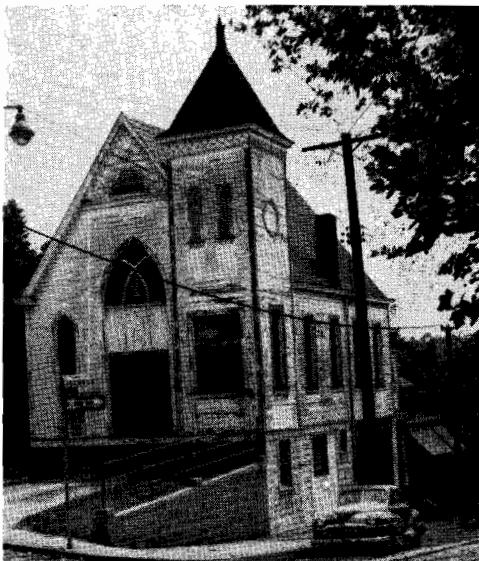


Arrow points to August Weslager in this illustration reprinted from a booklet issued on the 50th anniversary in 1912 of the First German Baptist Church of the South Side, Pittsburgh. This is the only existing photograph of August Weslager.



One of August Weslager's great-great grandsons (George R. Tatnall) looks at old kitchen clock which August Weslager bought in 1882 at Weber's store in Pittsburgh to commemorate the birth of Edward, his first American-born son. Clock, which still keeps good time, in possession of the author.

August Weslager and his wife were early members of this little mission of the First German Baptist Church of the South Side built in 1894 at the corner of Jacunda and Beltzhoover Avenues in former Knoxville Borough. It was within a short walking distance of the Weslager home in Beltzhoover. Services were discontinued after the Temple Baptist Church was built in Mt. Oliver merging the congregations. Now used as an auto repair shop.



he often attended services, and many of his German friends were members.

Buried near Catharina in Zimmerman's Cemetery are the Beltzhoover baker, August Heldt, and his wife, prominent members of the German community and close friends of August and Catharina. In fact, they had named one of their daughters after Catharina. Nearby is the grave of Pastor Lorch, as well as the grave of his son-in-law, the late Judge Gustav L. Schramm, who married Lorch's daughter Sophie. My Uncle Charlie (one of August's sons) is buried in a grave not far distant from the family plot, and Uncle Will is buried in the family plot.

Funeral services for Catharina were conducted by the Reverend H. C. Gleiss of the First German Baptist Church of the South Side. The services were held in the Knoxville chapel at Beltzhoover Avenue and Jacunda Street. Some years later, my Uncle Edward came to live with us before his marriage to Aunt Ellen, and one of his possessions was a framed white dove, carrying in its beak a satin ribbon on which the words "Our Mother" were lettered in gold. It had been part of one of the floral tributes at Catharina's funeral, which, for sentimental reasons, he had saved.

To the best of my knowledge, only one likeness of Catharina exists. When she was in her late forties a snapshot was taken in the backyard of the Beltzhoover property. Years later, my Aunt Alma scissored Catharina's head from the photograph and had it mounted in a gold pin then fashionable for women to wear on their blouses. Aunt Alma gave the pin to me in 1940, although it was in poor condition and the clasp broken. It is still in my possession.

Catharina is described as being a quiet, modest, soft-spoken person. She was about five feet tall, and had brown eyes and brown hair with a natural wave. Although I heard my uncles and aunts speak of their father's authoritative and unyielding manner during their childhood, they said only the kindest things about their mother.

The youngest child at the time of Catharina's death was Earnest, born January 8, 1900. (I have spelled his name the way it was recorded in the 1900 census, but his brothers and sisters always called him Erny.) They were all fond of the little boy who was 20 years younger than his oldest brother! In the fall, after his mother's death, Erny contracted diphtheria, and August was deeply grieved for the second time that year when the eight-year old boy died in the Beltzhoover home. As a measure of desperation during his last few days, the physician inserted a silver tube in the boy's throat to enable him to breathe, but it did not save his life. Erny was buried beside his mother in the Zimmerman's Cemetery.

After Erny's death, August became very lonely. For more than 30 years he had leaned on Catharina as his helpmate. She had stood by his side when they left West Prussia and settled in Duisburg, and when he left the fatherland to come to America. Although the older

children had married and left the family fireside, there were still four under 16 — August, Jr., Clara, Emma, and Charlie.

As he sat in the little Baptist chapel each Sunday, listening to the sermon, August fingered the watch chain on his vest given to him by Catharina, and made from strands of her hair. (This plaited chain has also been passed down to me and is an heirloom which I treasure. Catharina had it made as a present for August, using money she had patiently saved for many months. My father said that August was so touched when she gave him this present that tears welled up in his eyes.)

August yearned for companionship, which he found in the company of one of his neighbors, a good Christian widow and member of the First German Baptist Church of the South Side, Mrs. Mary Peterman, neé Krueger. Mrs. Peterman had six living children by her first marriage: Augusta, Elizabeth, Mamie, Henry, Walter, and Edward. The Peterman children had been raised in Beltzhoover and had attended the Beltzhoover School. In fact, there was already a marriage tie between the two families. Albert, one of August's sons (destined to outlive all his brothers), and Mamie, one of Mrs. Peterman's daughters, who had been schoolmates together, were united in marriage in 1908.

On Labor Day, 1910, August and Mrs. Peterman were married at the residence of the Reverend Mr. A. W. Lang, the Baptist clergyman.

On February 23, 1911, August sold his little house on Delmont Avenue to George Guenther, who had married Mrs. Peterman's daughter Elizabeth.¹¹ I well remember George Guenther, a kindly man, much admired by August Weslager. His wife, whom we fondly called "Aunt Lizzie" was also a generous and well-disposed person.

When Delmont Avenue was graded for paving, the little Weslager house was left standing high above the street. Later it was torn down and replaced by a brick residence.

After his second marriage, August and his wife lived in the house she owned at 421 Cedarhurst Street in Beltzhoover, and it was there he died July 29, 1913, at the age of 62. He was buried beside Catharina in the Zimmerman Cemetery where a stone, inscribed *Wollschlaeger*, placed there by his widow, marks the family plot. The Reverend Mr. Henry Schulz, one of Mr. Gleiss's successors, conducted the funeral services in the Cedarhurst home.

A number of years after August's death, his widow married a widower, Theodore Engelmohr, also of German birth. I can well remember seeing both of them at the Temple Baptist services. She, too, was a kindly and considerate person, known to my father and mother as "Ma." Her sister, Aunt Emma Hamel (and Aunt Emma's children) were also members of the church. The two sisters were deeply religious and their children were raised under rigid moral disciplines. Miss Phoebe Hamel, one of Aunt Emma's daughters, taught the Sun-

¹¹ *Allegheny County Deed Book*, Vol. 1684, p. 321.

day School class in which my cousin Harvey and I were members. I still treasure the little book she gave me for memorizing the books of the Bible.

John Ulmer and his wife Emilie enjoyed moderate prosperity in America, but their marriage had a tragic ending. Following the birth of a daughter, Emilie contracted what was diagnosed as milk fever, lost her mind, and committed suicide. The child lived for about four years and also died. Later, John Ulmer married a widow, Wilhelmina Kline, who had a daughter Amanda by her first marriage. John Ulmer had a son by the second marriage, Walter Ulmer.

Uncle John, as he was fondly known to the Weslagers of two generations, was a beloved relative. His visits were always pleasant ones. I can remember the time he visited our home on an Easter Sunday when I was a small boy, and how he praised my mother's cooking. He was a violinist and a story teller of keen wit. His father, we were always told, had been an accomplished musician and a man of culture.

Uncle John lived for many years in a bungalow in the then rural part of the Homestead suburbs with Aunt Minnie (as Wilhelmina Kline was called). The bungalow was built for him by my father to replace an earlier dwelling that caught fire during the night and burned to the ground. As a boy, I visited Uncle John while my father was building the little house, and I have recollections of Uncle John showing me the farm shed on the property in which he was temporarily sleeping while the new dwelling was being built.

Earlier in this account I referred to a second visit I made to Uncle John's home, many years later, also in company with my father. I was then a student at the University of Pittsburgh, and one Saturday I asked my father to take me to see Uncle John and he readily agreed. We drove down Glass Run Road to the edge of Homestead, parked the car, and hiked up a wooded hillside to his home. Uncle John was nearing the end of his years, although he was still sharp and alert. Aunt Minnie was also living, and I can remember how delighted she was with the cake my father brought as a present. Uncle John and my father had a long talk together in the German language, which my father translated for me as they conversed. I can still remember the humorous twinkle in Uncle John's eyes, and how my father roared at some of his witty remarks. I have since regretted that I did not have the foresight to query Uncle John in detail about my grandfather's earlier years in Germany. Not long afterwards he died. After his death, his son, Walter Ulmer, continued to live in the house built by my father.

One story told about Uncle John is a classic in the family. His nephew, my Uncle Charlie, once showed him a figurine of the popular comic strip character Mutt of "Mutt and Jeff" fame.

"Who's that," Uncle John asked in German.

"That's Mutt," Uncle Charlie replied.

"*Nein, nein,*" said Uncle John, "*Das ist nicht mutt. Das is Plaster of Paris!*"

6.

Catharina's youngest brother, Carl (Charles) Walter married Mary Karl, who came with him to America. Carl, following the footsteps of his father, became a farmer, and the couple lived on a farm in Washington County for many years where they raised their family. They were the closest blood relatives of the Welslagers since Uncle John was only a half brother to Catharina.

The names of the children of Uncle Carl Walter and Aunt Mary were: Fred, Dora, Freda, Henry, Otto, Mary, Emma, and Charles.

It is of interest to note the similarity of the names of the Walter children to those born to August and Catharina. As I have indicated, Catharina gave birth in Germany to Heinrich (Henry) and Maria (Mary) who died in infancy. The other children were Wilhelm (William), Edward, Fred, Albert, August, Charles, Earnest (who died at age 8), Alma, Emma, and Clara. When Catharina died in 1908 she left 10 children. Most of her children were delivered by midwives — a certain Mrs. Heisterkamp was usually called in by the German families of Beltzhoover to deliver their babies.

During my childhood, some of my father's cousins came from time to time to visit our home. Fred Walter came most often, but I also remember Dora and Freda as Sunday visitors. I can also remember seeing Otto Walter on one occasion. I believe he lived in Arizona, and had returned to Pittsburgh to visit his folks.

About 1910, or perhaps a little later, my father corresponded with his Aunt Anna, who had married Carl Schiel, and was then still living in Duisburg. Her address was Kultur Strasse. I wrote to her at this address in 1939, but my letter was returned, addressee unknown.

7.

The evolution of the name Welslager, which occurred after August was living in America, is of particular interest, because it was an American invention, and an accidental one at that. The name of our branch of the family, as I have shown, was variously recorded in Germany in the 19th century in such forms as *Wollschlaeger*, *Wollenschläger*, *Wollschnäger*, etc.

The late Dr. M. C. Elmer, a member of the University of Pittsburgh faculty when I was an undergraduate, told me that his grandmother Katherine *Wohlschlaeger* came to America in 1853, and settled in Wisconsin. Dr. Elmer maintained that *Wohlschlaeger* was the original form of the family name, and that after the Burgundian Wars about 1577 A.D. some members of the family went from Saxony to Switzerland. The first syllable, *wohl*, was later etymologized to *woll*, according to Dr. Elmer, and in its original form he said the name was a combination of *wohl* and *schläger* meaning a "good striker" or "swordsmen." He said the family settled in the Swiss canton of Aargau in the

16th century where members spread to Germany, Russia, Poland, and elsewhere. He told me there are still records of the family in Switzerland. I do not vouch for any of this information, but pass it along as he told it to me.

I have sought the advice of name scholars both in Germany and America in an effort to obtain other likely derivations of the name. Most authorities agree with the interpretation below quoted from a letter written to me by Dr. W. P. Schmid of the University of Tübingen in Germany:

"The term: *Wolle schlagen*, i.e., 'to clean the wool' can be traced back to at least the Middle High German period. I should like to draw your attention to compounds like *wollenslazer-lanifax*, the technical term *wollensleger* (by the way *Sleger*, *Schläger* occur as proper names in the same sense, too), or to the Middle High German sentence, '*der kunde spinnen oder wollen slahen muss.*' ['the one who spins wool or beats wool'] The English word *slay* or *sley* from Anglo-Saxon *sleahe* should also be mentioned. The latter means 'a weaver's reed, an instrument of a weaver's loom that has teeth like a comb', and is a derivation from *sleán* 'to strike', which is etymologically the same as German *slahan*, *slahen*, *schlagen*."

Professor Ernst Pulgram of the Department of Romance Languages, University of Michigan, had the following to say in a letter to me:

"The name *Wollschlaeger* or *Wollenschlaeger* has the obvious meaning of 'one who beats wool', that is for the purpose of cleaning it. The English verb used in this sense is, I believe, 'carding' though that activity is generally associated with a machine; the technical term in German is *krempeln*. But, as you no doubt know, in etymology in general, and in particular in the etymology of proper names, the most obvious is not necessarily the true solution, because the very obviousness of a linguistic form may be due to what we call popular etymology, that is by the desire to impart an obvious meaning to something whose meaning is not obvious at all. Hence, for all one knows, the name *Wollschlaeger* may really be such a re-interpretation of something else. [e.g., *Wohl schlaeger*.] In names, then, to arrive at the true historic meaning, at the entire history of an item, it is almost necessary to deal with each item separately; that is, in your case, to pursue backward, as far as possible, the history of your family and its name, until its beginning — if such can be found."

To date, I have been unable to find the name earlier than the 18th century in the four variants found in the Gross Komorsk records previously cited: *Wolszleger* (1730), *Wolsleier* (1771), *Wollschläger* (1788), and *Wolszleier* (1797). Three of these forms are apparently Slavish corruptions of the German name, and the 1788 entry could be interpreted as *wohl schläger* or *woll schläger*. None of them brings us any closer to solving the problem.

One thing is certain: many persons bearing the name in its several variants came to America from Germany. For example, on October 29, 1880, the vessel *Braunschweig* brought to America the Prussian workman, August *Wollschläger*, aged 36, Marie, aged 46, Mathilde, aged 21, Johann, aged 18, Clara, aged 16, Franz, aged 10, Rosalie, aged 9, and August, aged 4.¹²

Furthermore, the name is found today in many American cities. The Pittsburgh telephone directory lists both *Wollschlaegers* and *Wollenschlaegers*. The Baltimore telephone directory lists *Wollschlagers* and *Wollslagers*. There are a number of *Wollschlagers* in Detroit, and *Wollschlegers* in Rochester. Chicago has *Wollschlaegers*, and Philadelphia has both *Woolslagers* and *Woolslayers*, all variants of the same name.

Whether the German name originally denoted the occupation of an ancestor, whose livelihood had something to do with the preparation of wool prior to weaving, must remain, at least for the present, inconclusive. As Professor Pulgram suggested, the name may have been etymologized; which simply means that the original meaning may have been something entirely different, which was re-interpreted at a later date. If so, there may be validity to Dr. Elmer's views that the original name had nothing to do with the processing of wool, but had military connotations.

The transposition from *Wollschlaeger* to *Weslager* is easier to explain. It was not done intentionally nor in an effort to abbreviate the German name, as some family names were deliberately changed. The alteration occurred in 1886 or 1887 when William, August's first-born son, enrolled in the Beltzhoover Public School. When Miss Cordehlia Jamison, his teacher, asked his name he pronounced it as he had heard it spoken at home. Since he obviously could not spell it, she made a stab at recording it as it sounded to her. It probably went down on the school records something like *Wollslager* or *Wellslager*. I made every effort to locate the Beltzhoover School records to ascertain the first recorded spelling, but none exist prior to 1912, the year the present Board of Public Education was organized in Pittsburgh.

The error was also perpetuated by the lawyer who drew up the deed of sale for the lot in Beltzhoover purchased by August and Catharina in 1887. He wrote the name as *Wollslayer*, and it so appears in the deed still on file.

By the time August's other children started school the family name had taken form in the school records as *Weslager*. My father told me that was how his name was spelled in the first grade in 1890, and he was the third of August's children to start school. It seemingly made little difference to August that his surname was variously written in public school, deed, and other documents. In fact, the American modification was easier for the family to spell and pronounce than the

¹² Microfilm 237, Roll No. 432, National Archives.

German name. Most of the German adults in Beltzhoover, I presume, continued to refer to the family by the German form, although their children knew August's children by the Americanized name.

August himself used the name Weslager, as the entries below from the Pittsburgh and Allegheny *Directory* clearly reveal. In fact, he answered to both names. The fact that in West Prussia the name, even in its German forms, had been variously spelled, no doubt contributed to his indifference. Who was to know which was right and which was wrong?

I have taken the various spellings as applied specifically to August and his family and have set them down in a chronological listing as they appear in documented sources:

1852 August Wollschlaeger

The name appears this way in August's baptismal certificate, and his father's name is spelled Heinrich Wollschlaeger.

1875 August Wollenschläger and Catharina Walter [Wollenschläger]

The name so appears in the register of arrivals at Duisburg for the years 1872-1876, under date of September 20, 1875.

1877 August Wollschläger and Catharina Walter [Wollschläger]

This is the way the name is given in the baptismal certificate for Maria Wollschläger, a daughter born February 19, 1877. The certificate is dated February 25, 1877, at which time August and Catharina were living in Feldmark, a suburb of Duisburg.

1880-1881 August Wollschläger

The name appears in this form in the census records taken at Duisburg during 1881 and 1882, during which time August and his family lived at 59 Kultur Strasse, 31 Eichen Strasse, 33 Eichen Strasse, and 46 Eichen Strasse.

1887 August Wollslayer and Kathrin Wollslayer

This is the first official entry in America that I have found. It occurs in the deed dated July 7, 1887 covering a lot in Beltzhoover Borough sold to August and Catharina by Thomas S. Maple.

1900 August Weslager and Cathrine Weslager

The first appearance of the Americanized form in official records occurs in the 1900 census. As of June 1, 1900, when the census was taken, the address of the family was given as "21 Delmont, Pittsburgh." I have a copy of the census record on file at Pittsburgh, Kansas in the Bureau of Census, Department of Commerce. It gives me the following information:

Name	Relationship	Age	Birth	Place of Birth	Citizenship
Weslager, August	Head	47	Aug. 1852	Germany	Alien
Cathrine	Wife	43	June 1856	Germany	Alien
Wm.	Son	19	June 1880	Germany	Alien
Edward	Son	18	April 1882	Penna.	
Frederick H.	Son	16		"	
Albert J.	Son	13		"	
Alma M.	Daughter	10		"	
August F.	Son	8		"	
Clara H.	Daughter	6		"	
Emma M.	Daughter	4		"	
Charlie J. [R.]	Son	3		"	
Earnest J.	Son	6 mos.		"	

(The census gives the date of immigration to America as 1883, but this is obviously an error, contradicted by the above entry showing that Edward was born in Pennsylvania in 1882.)

I made a further effort to obtain data from the next census taken April 10, 1910, but August is apparently not listed. However, this information would be of no particular significance because the *first* census after August's arrival gives his name as Weslager, as well as other members of the family. Thus, the new name was officially entered in the U.S. census records in 1900. Under Pennsylvania law, an alien, who did not change his name for illicit purposes, was legally entitled to identify himself with a new or modified name. There was nothing unusual about name changes among German immigrants. Many family names were written in English according to dialectical pronunciation. Other names were changed by direct translation or by spelling with English sounds. Such transformations produced many varieties of the same name, which is exactly what happened in August's case.

The following city directory listings indicate how the Americanized name continued to be used in the same form given in the 1900 census.

1901-1905 August Weslager

This entry appears in the Pittsburgh & Allegheny *Directory* for the year 1901 and again in 1902:

Weslager, August lab. 21 Delmont

The 1903 issue lists the following members of the family:

Weslager, Albert lab. 21 Delmont
 " August lab. 21 Delmont
 " Edward barber 21 Delmont
 " Frederick lab. 21 Delmont
 " Wm. molder 21 Delmont

The 1904 edition has the following listing:

Weslager, August lab. 21 Delmont
" Edward barber 21 Delmont
" Wm. molder 21 Delmont

In 1905, the following individuals are shown:

Weslager, August lab. 21 Delmont
" Edward barber 85 Washington Ave.
" h. 21 Delmont
" Frederick lab. 21 Delmont
" Wm. molder 1027 Brownsville Ave.

1908 August Woolchlager and Catherin Woolchlager

The following obituary appears in the Saturday, April 25, 1908 edition of the *Pittsburgh Chronicle Telegraph*:

WOOLCHLAGER, CATHERIN—On Friday, April 24, 1908 at 7:10 P.M. Catherin beloved wife of August Woolchlager (neé Walters) aged 51. Funeral from her late residence No. 521 Delmont street, Thirty-eighth Ward, South Side, Pittsburgh on Monday, April 27. Service at Second German Baptist Church, corner of Beltzhoover avenue and Jacunda street at 2 o'clock. Friends of the family are respectfully invited to attend.

1911 August Wollschlaeger

On February 23, 1911, the property formerly owned by August and Catharina was sold to George and Elizabeth M. Guenther. The deed refers to "August Wollslager or August Wollschlaeger and Mary Wollschlaeger his [second] wife, etc."

1913 August Wollschlaeger

The following obituary appears in the *Pittsburgh Press*, Wednesday, July 30, 1913:

WOLLSCHLAEGER—On Tuesday July 9, 1913 at 10 A.M. August Wollschlaeger husband of Mary Peterman Wollschlaeger (neé Krueger) aged 61. Funeral services Thursday at 2 P.M. at his late residence 421 Cedarhurst Street, Beltzhoover, Pittsburgh. Friends of the family are respectfully invited to attend. Interment in Pastor Lorth's [Zimmerman's] cemetery. (Butler, Pa. papers please copy)

Following his second marriage, August discontinued using the Americanized name, and re-adopted the German form Wollschlaeger. By this time, however, August's sons and daughters, many of whom were married, had grown up using the name Weslager. Two grandsons had already been born, my cousin Edward and myself, and our births were recorded as Weslager, and we never knew any other name. My mother was never aware that there had been a name other

than Weslager until some time after her marriage. Aunt Clara, August's last surviving daughter, told me that from childhood she never knew any other name except Weslager.

Only one of August's sons, my Uncle Albert, followed his father's example, by returning to the Germanized form. The name was also used in the German spelling by his son, my late cousin, Harvey Wollschlaeger. Harvey and I were schoolmates together in Knoxville Borough, and I have fond memories of my kind and gentle cousin. We were also in the same Sunday School class and often sat together during church services at Temple Baptist Church. The fact that his father was my father's brother, and yet our surnames were spelled differently, may have seemed inconsistent, yet it did not alter our affectionate relationship, and it caused neither of us any particular embarrassment.

In the third generation, the German name has now completely given way to the Americanized form. Anyone bearing the name Weslager can trace his ancestry to August — so far as I know, there are no other Weslagers — anywhere.

8.

Now a few words about the Weslager family's church affiliations. As we have seen, August and Catharina were both confirmed in the Lutheran Church in Germany. Following his arrival in Pittsburgh, August attended services at *Brandt's Kirche* on 18th Street where the German language was spoken. This was a Lutheran church of the Missouri Synod, known as St. Paul's, whose disciplines were extremely rigid. Although he had been baptized a Lutheran, August did not become a member of this church.

After moving to Beltzhoover Borough, August and Catharina were, in time, influenced by German neighbors to attend Baptist services. The First German Baptist Church of the South Side built a mission in 1894 for \$2400 at the corner of Jacunda Street and Beltzhoover Avenue in Knoxville Borough. The German language was spoken at the mother church and also at the Knoxville chapel, which August and Catharina started to attend.

In 1904, August and Catharina were baptized by the Reverend Mr. G. A. Sheets (assistant to the Reverend Mr. H. C. Gleiss of the parent church), and became members of the Knoxville church. They were faithful members, attending church regularly, and, for a period of time, they served as sextons.

The Knoxville chapel, which in 1899 became the Second Baptist Church, and a sister mission erected in Carrick Borough in 1906, were both displaced when the Temple Baptist Church was erected and dedicated February 25, 1919, at the corner of Onyx Avenue and Brownsville Road in Mt. Oliver Borough. The former congregation of the parent church on the South Side, which was sold in 1916, attended the church in Mt. Oliver. In fact, many members of the congregation had already moved to the south hills boroughs.

My Uncle Charlie attended the First Baptist Church and Sunday School and also sang in the choir. Uncle Albert and Aunt Mamie were active members, and Uncle Albert was a member of the Building Committee who laid the plans for the new edifice in Mt. Oliver. As a boy of 10, I attended the dedicatory services at Temple Baptist Church with my father. Coins, current newspapers, and other historical documents were sealed behind the corner stone. Samuel Hamel, the contractor, who was also superintendent of the Sunday School, spread the mortar when the stone was laid.

When the building was completed, my brother Fred C. Weslager, my sister Dolores, and I attended the Sunday School. Eventually all of us, including my father and mother, were baptized by the Reverend Mr. Arthur A. Schade, who began his pastorate on January 1, 1922.

Uncle Albert, Aunt Mamie, and my cousin Harvey continued to be faithful members. My father and Uncle Albert served as trustees, and at one period Uncle Albert was the church treasurer. My father served as president of the Men's Bible Class and was also a member of the church choir.¹³ Aunt Mamie and my mother were active in the church and Sunday School. During my boyhood, Mr. Schade conducted two services each Sunday morning — the first in the English language, and the second in German. The organist and choir members all knew both languages.

August Weslager died before Temple Baptist Church was built. If he had lived, he would have attended services at this church along with other former members of the Knoxville chapel. I have already indicated that his widow by his second marriage (and her children by her first marriage) were all members of Temple Baptist Church. As the older German members passed away, the German language services were discontinued, but the old families are still represented by the new generation.

A number of denominations are represented today by August Weslager's descendants, and many have been active in their churches. Uncle Charlie, who became affiliated with the Evangelical Church after his marriage, was a lay preacher in the Arlington Avenue church. His son, my cousin Charles Weslager, Jr., was educated for the ministry and was one of the six men in half a century to be recommended for license to preach by his church. (Prior to the building of the Arlington Avenue church, the members of the Evangelical congregation held services as early as 1885 in the home of Wilhelm Heinzel, a close friend of August Weslager. The two men worked together in the foundry for many years).

¹³ In 1902, when my father was 18, he became a choir member in the Montooth Presbyterian Mission on Lafferty Avenue. The congregation later built the McKinley Park Presbyterian Church at Delmont and Chalfont on land donated by Thomas S. Maple. My father was a member of this church and sang in the choir. After his marriage he became a Baptist, and, by coincident, a member of the church which was an extension of the mission to which his parents belonged.

Another of August's grandchildren, John Barclay (son of Clara Weslager and Roy Barclay) was ordained a Methodist minister in 1940.

An outstanding trait among August Weslager's sons and daughters was a fondness for music. One of my earliest memories was listening to four-part harmony sung by my father, Uncle Charlie, Aunt Alma, and Aunt Clara. "The Old Rugged Cross" was one of their favorite hymns, but they sang other songs, too. Wherever Weslagers gathered there was always singing, and this love of music is a trait in the third generation where there are a number of vocalists and instrumentalists.

A well-developed sense of humor and a sharp wit also characterized many members of the family. August had a flair for story-telling, as did all of his sons. When Uncle Charlie, Uncle "Gus", Uncle Al, Uncle Ed, Uncle Will, and my father were together the stories and anecdotes were told by the score, each calling upon a remarkable memory to bring to life incidents of their boyhood.

I would be remiss not to mention the propensities of my father and uncles for good food. No matter what occasion — a church or lodge picnic, a Sunday visit, or an evening of card playing ("Sixty-six" was their favorite game), the festivities culminated at the table where they all engaged in their favorite indoor sport.

* * * * *

So far as I have been able to determine, there is only one picture of August Weslager in existence. It occurs in a group photograph of one of the Bible classes taken in front of the First German Baptist Church of the South Side. It was reproduced in a souvenir publication marking the 50th anniversary of the church, published about March 1913. August was broad of shoulder, stocky and sturdily built, about five feet, eight inches tall. His hair, closely cut, was parted at the side. Hazel eyes were deep set under a broad forehead and heavy brows. The ends of his moustache were turned down, following the severe lines of his mouth. His countenance was stern. August was deeply religious, and one of the old German prayers from West Prussia which he repeated at mealtime was as follows:

Komm Herr Jesus
Sei unser Gast
Und segne alles
Was Du uns bescheret hast
Amen

My father, remembering the prayer of his childhood when raising his own family, made a free translation for us. My brother, sister, and I said this prayer before meals at our home, and we taught my father's translation to our children:

Come Lord Jesus
Be our guest
And this meal
Will be truly blest
Amen

August Weslager was a stern father, an authoritarian, who didn't spoil his children by sparing the rod. His temper and physical strength were such that when his anger was aroused his children stood in fear of where the blow would next fall. He ruled the household with a firm hand and demanded obedience from his children. He brooked no interference, believing that children should be seen but not heard. He was a Prussian of the old school, who observed the disciplines of his generation: courage, frugality, and hard work.

In the winter of 1892, both August and Catharina were taken ill with what was diagnosed as pneumonia. Physicians had none of the modern drugs, and death often resulted. Both their lives hung by a thread for many days, and there were sleepless nights in the little Beltzhoover home. August was confined to his bed for 14 weeks and Catharina for 16 weeks. For seemingly endless days and nights hot flaxseed poultices were applied to their chests. Good neighbors came to the assistance of the children, and Mamie Gilbert and Viola ("Ollie") Stewart assisted in managing the home. Mrs. Fried, a kind neighbor, brought hot soup and prepared other food for the family. Mrs. Elizabeth Roeper took Alma and Fred to her home. Mrs. Weidenhoff cared for August Jr., then a babe in arms, even serving as his wet nurse. (Mrs. Roeper was Catharina's oldest friend. She was born in Osnabruck, Germany, and she and her husband, John, settled in Beltzhoover in 1887 where they raised eight children. When I was a young man, my father and I visited Mrs. Roeper in 1940 in her little Beltzhoover home. She was then in her 82nd year. She recognized my father, and threw her arms around him and called him "son." She told me how she had taken care of him during his parents' illness.)

During August's and Catharina's convalescence, their physician, Dr. Herman Hagerman, prescribed fresh milk. August, frugal of necessity, decided to buy a cow, and one was purchased for \$40. When they had fully recovered there was a surplus of milk which was sold to one of the neighbors. Recognizing the possibility of a small milk business to augment his wages, August bought several cows. For a number of years he operated a small dairy farm. His sons tended the cows and delivered the milk; Catharina kept the books. There was always fresh milk for the family, and Catharina made wholesome cheeses, fresh butter, and other dairy products.

Uncle Will told me that he remembered taking the cows to pasture after school in Butcher's Grove (later McKinley Park), returning at 4:00 or 5:00 in the morning to bring them home, milk them, and deliver milk to the customers. There were about 30 families on their route who bought fresh milk for 4 cents a pint, skim milk 2 cents a quart, and fresh butter for 16 cents a pound!

Uncle Al told me that there were nine cows in their little herd, and that he remembered accompanying his older brothers as far as Bon Air to round them up. He told me they called one of the cows Methuselah because she was so old.

On occasion, when the cows gave more milk than was needed to serve the regular customers, the Weslager boys would trudge over the dusty, country road to Knoxville Borough, with a pail of milk on each arm, soliciting business from door to door.

One of the favorite cows was called "Lady." She was almost a pet because of her gentle ways. Some 50 years later, my father, to while away a Sunday afternoon, whittled a toy cow from a block of wood and painted it. Some days later, Uncle Will visited us, and when he saw the toy on our parlor mantel, he said, "That's Lady." My father had made such an amazing likeness that it brought back boyhood memories.

When my uncles came to visit us when I was a boy (Uncle Ed and Uncle Charlie both lived in our home before their marriages), the conversation always turned to their boyhood and incidents that had taken place in Beltzhoover — how they played "hooky" from school; the time their sister Alma accidentally set the house on fire; the time Ed injured his leg resulting in an operation that caused him to wear a special shoe and walk with a limp for the rest of his life; the "loafing shanty" in Joe Green's stable; the visits of Uncle John, and their visits to Uncle Carl's farm; the time "Gus" ran away from home and got so hungry he took a bite from a cake of soap, and many other incidents which I have forgotten. Stories about August Weslager, whom they always referred to as "Pap," were told over and over again.

I remember August Weslager, but only vaguely. He was on his deathbed in Beltzhoover and I was only four years old. My father took me for a visit, and incredible though it may seem, I remember that they conversed in German, and I can still see my grandfather's pale face against the white linen sheet. I also remember a cuckoo clock on the wall. Later, my father told me that one of the things his father said to him, knowing that death was near, was "*Angst habe ich nicht.*" This means, "I have no fear."

When my father was on his own deathbed many years later, he reminded me that he had watched his father die, as I then sat by his bedside and watched him grow weaker and weaker. "That's life, son," he said, "and someday, your sons will be in the same position you are now in." He said to me in English, "I have no fear." To the Baptist minister, who came to visit him and who understood the German language, he said, as his father had said before him, "*Angst habe ich nicht.*" The minister used this phrase as the theme of the funeral services for my father.

* * *

Though unlettered, August Weslager was nobody's fool, and among the many stories told about him, I have here included a few which give a certain insight to the man's character.

A humorous incident, although it must have seemed tragic at the time, relates to a cheese which Catharina had made. It was on the

kitchen table one evening, as tempting a dish as could be found. It remained there during the night for she intended to serve it to the family the next day. The following morning when August entered the kitchen he found a large piece bitten from it. He was furious! Which of his ungrateful sons or daughters could have perpetrated a crime of such proportions?

"Who did it?" he thundered in German, the language that he always spoke at home. No one answered.

One by one he summoned his sons. "Fritz, come here. August, you're next. Now it's your turn, Eddie." Each opened his mouth at August's bidding, quaking in his boots. At last came William's turn, and as he opened his mouth, August bellowed triumphantly in German to his first born, "So, it was you! Look!" He held the cheese up to William's mouth. The culprit's teeth fitted perfectly the marks on the cheese!

* * *

A lumbermill in downtown Pittsburgh offered sawdust for sale at 5 cents a bag. It would make excellent bedding for the cows, August thought, but a nickel was a nickel.

"Get me a needle and thread!" he ordered his sons.

"The next day he handed a nickel and a folded burlap bag to Fred. "Go buy a bag of sawdust for the cows," he said.

Imagine the boy's surprise when he unfolded the bag at the lumbermill. It was not of ordinary size, but was actually two bags sewn together to make one exceptionally long one. The lumbermill had failed to stipulate the size of the bag, and the manager of the establishment could not help from chuckling over the "dumb Dutchman from Beltzhoover" who had outsmarted him.

* * *

August had an indomitable will and extraordinary strength. One day he bought a new cow and a calf. On the way home the animals became frightened by a passing horse and wagon, and they broke loose. August had a terrific struggle, finally wrestling the cow to the ground before he could tether her again. He came home with the subdued cow walking quietly at the end of the rope. In his arms he carried the calf who was too stubborn to be led. August was tired but victorious.

* * *

During August's and Catharina's convalescence from pneumonia their son William came home from school one day out of breath. He had found a man's watch. Every attempt was made to locate the owner, for August had a sense of honesty as well as a deep regard for private property. Several weeks followed during which time there were no claimants. August decided that Fate had sent this gift to the little family. The doctor had submitted his bill, which was still unpaid; it amounted to \$36.

August had raffle tickets printed, and he sold chances on the watch to his friends and neighbors. The net returns netted exactly \$36, and the doctor's bill was paid!

* * *

August was a diligent workman with an unusual reserve of energy. He walked from his home in Beltzhoover to the South Side mills and back again every night. This was about three or four miles each way.

There were occasional emergencies necessitating his remaining in the mill or foundry for several days and nights in succession. As a millwright, he was engaged in maintenance work to keep the mills in operation. At one time, the rising rivers flooded the mill, and he worked with water up to his shoulders to restore service.

One cold morning, when he was working in the Sligo Mill, the steam lines froze. August was trying to thaw them when one of the lines burst, searing his hands and arms with live steam. The burns were painful, and it was only Catharina's homemade salve called *Kalbchen Butter* that brought him relief and kept his hands and arms from being permanently scarred. Carbon oil and elderberry blossom tea were also cures found in the little Weslager home.

* * *

On Saturday morning in the fall, my father, then only 10 or 12, wanted to fly a kite, but he could find no twine. He stole quietly to his father's shoe repair box, which contained leather, nails, hammer, and — a ball of twine. He slipped the ball into his pocket and ran outside and fastened the cord to his kite. As the wind lifted the kite, the ball of twine unwound. The ball became smaller and smaller, and two pieces of green paper fluttered in the wind. Wrapped in the ball of twine were two \$1 bills. He ran to his mother crying, "Look, *Geld, Geld!*"

Catharina quietly took the two bills, re-wrapped them in the ball of twine and replaced the ball in the repair box. August never knew the difference, nor was he aware that the family had found the location of the private bank where he saved for his Christmas gift for Catharina.

* * *

The children's shoes were polished with lard one winter night, following custom, and placed in a neat row in the kitchen by the coal stove. The next morning the shoes were scattered over the floor, several ripped apart. In the corner lay the family dog. The family had retired, forgetting that he was in the house. After sniffing the lard on the shoes, the dog had engaged in an orgy of destruction.

August was purple with rage! This was an unforgivable crime that merited nothing less than capital punishment. "Get me a rope," he commanded. Without ceremony the dog was hanged from the limb of a poplar tree in the yard.

On a July Sunday, August and several of his sons visited his brother-in-law, Carl Walter, on the farm in Castle Shannon. After lunch, the boys were playing in the field. They thought their father was in the barn with their uncle. Suddenly they heard a whoop, and a farm horse came pounding down the dirt lane, hurdled a ditch, and galloped across the field. August was standing erect on the horse's back, holding the reins taut, as he had been taught trick riding in Germany, possibly in the cavalry. He could also jump from the saddle of a galloping horse, meanwhile holding the pommel, and running alongside the animal; then vaulting into the saddle and to the ground on the opposite side.

* * *

This concludes the simple story of August Weslager, a restless Prussian of ordinary means, who sought and found a new life in America for himself and his family. He lies buried in an obscure cemetery in a Pittsburgh suburb only a few miles from Beltzhoover where he lived and raised his family. A modest gravestone is inscribed with the German version of his name under which he was baptized by the Lutheran pastor in Neuenburg in 1852: *Wollschlaeger*.

In the same plot, a larger stone marks the grave of his oldest son, christened Wilhelm in Germany, but known in America as William or Will. It is inscribed with the surname *Weslager*.